



PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Awards \$1.5 Million to Springfield for Tree Planting Program

Funding Will Plant 2,400 Trees in Environmental Justice Neighborhoods

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Conservation & Recreation

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**BOSTON** — The Baker-Polito Administration today expanded the Greening the Gateway Cities Program to include the City of Springfield, and awarded the city \$1.5 million to plant 2,400 trees. The program, which targets the Commonwealth's 26 Gateway Cities, is designed to utilize tree plantings as a way to reduce energy use in urban neighborhoods by lowering heating and cooling costs for residents and businesses. Since the program's inception in 2015, more than 11,000 trees have been planted in 13 of the state's 26 Gateway Cities.

"This program is an excellent opportunity for the Commonwealth to invest in the future of our Gateway Cities, while reducing energy consumption and lowering greenhouse gas emissions," **said Governor Charlie Baker.**

"Thanks to this grant from the Greening the Gateway Cities Program residents of three Springfield neighborhoods will benefit from lower energy consumption, cleaner air, and reduced stormwater runoff," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton.** "Tree plantings achieved under the Program continue to be a great way to achieve multiple benefits for residents, business owners, and the City of Springfield."

With this award, Springfield is the 14<sup>th</sup> Gateway City in the program, and will administer a grant to plant 2,400 trees in the selected neighborhoods in the City. Eighty percent of the trees will be planted in private yards, and the balance along streets and on other public properties. The City's Parks Department will manage the grant and will contract with a private vendor to do the planting. The City will also contract with a local non-profit to assist with outreach to residents, encouraging them to sign-up for the trees, which would be planted at no cost to residents who agree to water them for two summers.

With a defined goal to increase the urban tree canopy to 5-10 percent in select neighborhoods in each Gateway City, the program is expected to reduce heating and cooling costs by approximately \$230 a year for an average household, once the trees reach maturity.

"The Commonwealth has been an excellent partner in our shared goal of protecting the environment by innovative endeavors to improve our infrastructure. I am grateful to Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito for their continued support and for allocating the funds necessary to enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods and assisting the city in protecting the overall health of our environment," **said Springfield Mayor Dominic Sarno.** "The city has taken great strides to reduce its energy consumption by 24% and reducing air pollutants by 22,550,000 pounds annually. To put it in perspective, that is equal to planting 3,000 trees annually. Planting an additional 2,400 trees throughout these neighborhoods is a critical step in the process of reversing the mismanagement of our environment over the past 100 years. I congratulate Governor Baker in making our environment a priority in the continued success of the Commonwealth."

Aimed at improving the tree canopy found in the Commonwealth’s Gateway Cities, the program’s benefits are not isolated to energy efficiency. By planting trees, communities will see a reduction in storm water runoff, higher air quality, an increase in property values and tax receipts, and a safer, healthier environment for residents.

“I’m thrilled that Springfield is receiving this grant to further advance its efforts to go green. Springfield has long been focused on beautification and committed to energy efficiency, which not only helps our environment but saves taxpayer dollars. With 2,400 new trees, Springfield will take one big step forward on both those goals,” **said State Senator Eric Lesser (D-Longmeadow), Chairman of the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies.**

“This grant money will go a long way towards the redevelopment efforts in Springfield,” **said State Senator James T. Welch (D-West Springfield).** “While adding trees may seem like a small project, Springfield’s residents will quickly notice how they can radically change a neighborhood for the better. It is important that as our city continues to change and evolve we continue to seek different ways to improve the day to day lives of the residents.”

The tree planting grant for the City of Springfield will be focused in the McKnight, Old Hill and Upper Hill neighborhoods.

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